

the promise

VA HUDSON VALLEY HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

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Have you
registered on
My HealtheVet?

www.myhealth.va.gov



If not, what are you waiting for?

My HealtheVet is an award winning Personal Health Record for Veterans. It offers Veterans anywhere, anytime Internet access to VA health care information, benefit information, online services, and more! With My HealtheVet, VA patients can refill their VA prescriptions, track their health vitals, keep on-line journals, and begin to create a personal Health Record. My HealtheVet features continue to expand, and we are pleased to announce that VA patients can now access a new online feature called **Wellness Reminders!**

A **Wellness Reminder** lets a VA patient know that according to current guidelines and recommendations for good care, it is time to do something like have a test or examination done. Some **Wellness Reminders** are for everyone, and some **Wellness Reminders** are specific to patients with known risks.

To get the most out of My HealtheVet, visit Castle Point or Montrose facilities to get an upgraded account, a one-time process known as In-Person Authentication (IPA). Register today! It's free, convenient and designed just for you, our Veterans.



VA Hudson Valley
Health Care System

www.hudsonvalley.va.gov

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on the cover

AVHA ACE award winning photo (2010) by Barbara DiCola, photographer, of the Recreation Therapy and Mental Health Recovery Center's gardening project at the Montrose campus, behind building 4. The Veterans grow beautiful plants and tasty vegetables.

director's message

Dear Veteran,

I want to welcome you to the first edition of our patient newsletter entitled **The Promise**. When President Abraham Lincoln gave his second inaugural address after the end of the civil war, he made a **promise** to a nation still healing from its wounds:

*To care for him who shall have borne the battle,
and for his widow, and his orphan.*

This promise in one phrase embodied the nation's commitment and responsibility to all men and women who served our nation in uniform.

This is a *promise* that the VA Hudson Valley Health Care System works hard everyday to keep. The promise ensures Veterans and their families are treated with courtesy, respect and appreciation, while delivering the best care anywhere.

This newsletter is for you our Veterans and your family. We will use this vehicle to make you aware of issues which may affect your health and advise you on precautions you should take or changes to your lifestyle that would improve your well-being. You will read stories of your fellow Veterans and their journeys to good health. We will also report on what we are doing to improve and advance the healthcare services and benefits you receive.

Updates will focus on the improvements we are making to our processes and to the actual facilities where care is delivered will ensure that care is "Veteran-centered," *meaning centered around you*.

We honor President Lincoln's promise through our mission to provide exceptional health care, in an effort to improve the health and well-being of Hudson Valley area Veterans. At the VA we are all honored and grateful to serve America's heroes.

Gerald F. Culliton

Director

VA Hudson Valley Health Care System

Suicide Prevention Hotline

It takes the courage and strength of a warrior to ask for help. If you or someone you know is in an emotional crisis...

Call **1-800-273-TALK** press 1 for Veterans



Oral Health and Total Health, What is the Connection?

by Francey Olavarria RHD, BS

GUM DISEASE AFFECTS ABOUT 80% OF AMERICANS AND IS A MAJOR CAUSE OF ADULT TOOTH LOSS. At the same time, heart disease is the #1 killer among both men and women. Recent studies suggest that gum disease is linked to heart



disease, respiratory disease and pre-term low birth weight babies. Gum disease can also make controlling blood sugar levels difficult

for diabetics. Research also suggests that preventing and/or treating gum disease may reduce the risk of other health problems.

Researchers have found that people with gum disease are almost twice as likely to suffer from coronary artery disease as those without gum disease. Scientists have found that bacteria (germs) in the mouth can be inhaled into the lungs to cause respiratory diseases such as pneumonia, especially in people with gum disease. Pregnant women with gum disease are up to 7 times more likely to deliver premature low birth weight babies.

Many people do not even realize that they have gum disease because it is usually painless in its early stages. The most common early signs of gum disease are red, swollen and bleeding gums. Other signs such as bad breath, spacing between the teeth, gums receding and loose teeth are seen in later stages of gum disease. It is essential that gum disease be prevented or detected early and treated in order to prevent problems with overall health. Your dentist and dental hygienist have vital roles in the prevention, detection and treatment of gum disease.

Hygienist Francey Olavarria examines Veteran Anthony Paolicelli's teeth for optimal oral health at the Montrose campus.

Making the MOVE to a Healthier Lifestyle; a Veteran's determination for success.

by Emmanuel Onyeobia

RICHARD MONROE WAS IN A HOSPITAL BED RECOVERING FROM A TOTAL KNEE REPLACEMENT WHEN HE MADE A LIFE-CHANGING DECISION. He vowed to lose something that he has been carrying for a very long time; his weight. And that was exactly what he did. He lost 71 pounds!

Born in Beacon but residing in Fishkill, he is a Veteran who served in the medical corps of the United States Army from 1954 to 1957. He is used to meeting and overcoming challenges and his weight program was not going to be any different. His weight became so much of a burden that he needed a total knee replacement and at one point was on 5 different medications. He vowed not only to lose the weight but to keep it off as well.

Different diet plans did not yield any results. His breakthrough started when he joined the MOVE program at Castle Point about 3 years ago. The MOVE program offered a multi-disciplinary approach to guide and encourage its participants to live a healthier lifestyle. There was even a session with a psychologist who taught the group how to be cognizant of the behavioral factors which causes someone to overeat or eat the wrong thing at the wrong time. He sees the support the participants receive from each other as one of the biggest advantages of the MOVE program. *"Some of the recipes that we get, some of the things that MOVE shares because Debbie and Christine (from the MOVE Program) share some of the stuff they've done, they've tried, that they bring in. So there is a lot of sharing, sometimes guys in the group and gals will share some things that way. We find out what snacks work for us that way and we share that information."*

He now enjoys the many benefits of living a healthier lifestyle. He has been taken off one of his medications and has had another

one reduced. *"As I started to lose the weight, I could move better. My stamina was better and pretty soon doing 2 1/2-3 miles a day. I could talk to you and do a fast-paced walk without getting outta breath."*



Richard credits his wife and the MOVE program as his primary source of support while he continuously works to maintain his weight and the lifestyle he has come to enjoy. *"My wife, Marie, has been very helpful when it comes to nutrition. She knows more about nutrition than I do. She is my main support at home while MOVE is my main support (outside the home)."* He also strongly suggests any Veteran who is struggling with his/her weight to get involved with the MOVE program for the information it shares and the support it offers. *"There is a lot of help out there and the benefits are fantastic."*

Veteran Richard Monroe reads about health in a local newspaper



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Montrose Campus
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Community Clinics

Carmel
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Carmel, NY 10512
845-228-5291

Goshen
30 Hatfield Lane
Suite 204
Goshen, NY 10924
845-294-6925

Monticello
Jefferson Professional Plaza
Unit 3
60 Jefferson Street
Monticello, NY 12701
845-791-4936

New City
345 North Main Street
Upper Level
New City, NY 10956
845-634-8942

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Port Jervis, NY 12771
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Breast Cancer Awareness

by Heather Katz RN, MSN

EVERYONE SEEMS TO KNOW SOMEONE WITH BREAST CANCER. Breast cancer is most commonly found in women, but it can also be found in men. It is the 2nd leading cause of cancer death among women in the United States. Early detection and treatment can significantly reduce breast cancer deaths.

Health care providers cannot always explain why one person gets cancer and another does not. Certain things may increase or decrease one's chance of developing cancer. A risk factor is anything that may increase your chance of developing breast cancer. The factors listed below may increase a woman's chance of developing breast cancer.

Gender: Simply being a woman is the main risk for breast cancer. Men can also get the disease, but it is 100 times more common in women than in men.

Age: The chance of getting breast cancer increases as a woman gets older.

Genetic: About 5-10% of breast cancers are thought to be linked to inherited changes in genetics.

Family History: Breast cancer risk is higher among women whose close blood relatives, from either the mother's or father's side, have the disease. Having a mother, sister or daughter with breast cancer doubles a woman's risk.

Personal History of Breast Cancer: A woman with cancer in one breast has a greater chance of getting a new cancer in the other breast or in another part of the same breast.

Race: White women are more likely to develop breast cancer but African-American women are more likely to die from breast cancer.

Dense Breast Tissue: Dense breast tissue means there are more glands and less fatty tissue. Women with dense breast tissue have a higher risk of breast cancer.

Menstrual Periods: Women who began having periods before age 12, or who went through menopause after age 55 have a slightly increased risk of breast cancer.

No Children or Having Children Later in Life: Women who have not had children or who had their first child after age 30 have a slightly higher risk of breast cancer.

Alcohol: Use of alcohol is clearly linked to an increased risk of breast cancer.

Weight: Being overweight is linked to a higher risk of breast cancer, especially for women who gained the weight later in adulthood. Regular exercise reduces breast cancer risk.

Knowledge is power. Know your risk level. Talk to your Hudson Valley VA health care provider about ways to control risk factors and when to schedule examinations.



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